

DALE COUNTY

Honorable Fred R. Steagall

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Sylvia Dodgen
Cindy Tibbets
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Deborah Riggs
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Andrew Kelley
Daniel Payant
Phillip Parker



Vista Volunteer: Brandi Miller

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Community Resource Fair

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.

Health - Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Births to unmarried teens

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Promote public awareness on the issue of births to unmarried teen mothers
- Collaborate with community agencies such as schools, clergy, and service providers to support at risk youth and teen pregnancy prevention efforts
- Research and apply for funding opportunities

Low weight births

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Provide patients with knowledge of prenatal services within Dale County and appropriate referrals in obtaining early and adequate prenatal care
- Advocate prenatal care, nonsmoking, substance abuse in pregnant teens/women
- Coordinate community resources such as WIC, Medicaid

Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Unsupervised youth after school and on weekends

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Promote community collaboration to develop after school activities and weekend events. Strategic planning for expanding and promoting community centers which will function as a place that is safe, has positive activities for both adults and youth, increases opportunities for social support, promotes sense of community, and acts as another venue for health and mental well-being programs to reach the public.
- Continued support and expansion of mentoring program, Boys and Girls Club and youth programs conducted by community and faith-based organizations
- Expand Parent Project/Life Skills program, to include working with Safe and Drug Free Schools coordinators for ways to encourage volunteer participation

Lack of Parental involvement and skills

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Expand Parent Project program with the schools in response to truancy problems and discipline problems to promote family interactions and appropriate limits on youth behavior
- Collaborate with faith-based organizations to bring Parent Project classes to parents who are not experiencing problems with their children. We have recently trained eight people in the community who are willing to volunteer their time to teach Parent Project to create a climate of positive parenting in Dale County

Education - Children

learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Early Childhood Education

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Provide Workshops and instructional programs for parents stressing the importance of reading to their children beginning at birth
- Provide special programming for parents and children to encourage the love of learning and reading
- Prepare our preschool children with skills to get them ready for kindergarten, by teaching them reading, music, and mathematics at an early age.

Academic Prep

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Guide those students who will pursue a career that requires a college degree in gaining skills necessary to be successful in college
- Establish criteria for academic diploma

Vocational Prep

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Guide those students who will pursue a career that does not require a college degree in planning a vocational skill
- Establish criteria for academic diploma

Business Education

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Guide those students who will pursue jobs related to business in planning coursework that will enable them to prepare for the business world
- Establish criteria for business diploma

Job Readiness Skills

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Require all students to enroll in a job readiness course emphasizing job-interviewing skills
- Require all students to participate in career day activities
- Require all students to have vocational/career studies to encourage them to find an interesting career choice
- Partner with state and local work force development programs
- Partner with public/private/church schools, Yes Program, Boys and Girls Club, Upward Bound, Alabama Employment Career Center, Dale County Public Library, Ozark-Dale County Chamber of Commerce and Ozark Housing Authority to provide job readiness and job outlook information.
- Partner with Alabama Cooperative Extension to Provide "Welcome to the Real World" in community for youth
- Partner with high school counselors in promoting technical training-possibly assist more students attending Youth Career Summit- possibly disseminating information on technical careers to all students
- Encourage school and community participation in the Business Expo
- Partner with schools to develop units of study aimed at hands on skills
- Booth at community events to educate parents and students on attendance requirements and assistance available to promote increased attendance
- Partner with schools to promote awareness of remediation assistance for the high school exam
- Parent Project- assists in promoting awareness in school and community
- PSA's for radio using youth as announcers- possibly youth on probation and in the Yes Program as announcers to assist in education of the at risk population
- Partner with local business to promote awareness of job readiness skills

Poor work ethic

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Beginning at an early age expose students to good work ethic
- Emphasize integrity, honesty, etc.

Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drug Education

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Support Dale County Drug Free Initiative- members attend coalition meetings and serve on advisory board
- Operation Save Teens- provide rewards and incentives for parent/guardian and student participation- possibly build on past years presentation
- Dale County Drug Task Force Presentation- provide incentives for community and school personnel participation- possibly build on past years presentation
- Tobacco Prevention Program- continues Tar Wars in elementary schools- possibly organizer "Kick Butt Day" through national organizations for high schools- possibly organize "Great American Smoke Out" through national organization for high school, elementary school and community
- Red Ribbon Week- assists in organizing school and community-wide campaign possibly rally and speakers
- Parent Project- assists in promoting awareness in schools and community
- DARE Program- support law enforcement in promoting education- possibly assist with Annual Dare Day
- Anger management, conflict resolution, and bully prevention in schools- possibly. "Second Step" and "Get Real About Violence" through Spectra Care, Southeast Alabama Youth Services and counselors.
- There is a need to provide more drug-free activities for the county's youth
- There is a need for training and education for parents and youth leaders on the most prevalent drugs

and identifying drug abuse among youth

- There is a need to develop and continue collaboration among civic groups, faith based sector, businesses, and other organizations involved in reducing substance abuse

Early Care and Education - Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

There is a need for more licensed family day care homes and day care centers with more paid day care slots for income eligible children of working parents

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Invite local legislators and Congressional representative to a Children's Policy Council meeting for a discussion of need for money for child care
- Invite the members of the Dale County Childcare Association to attend the Children's Policy Council meetings to represent that group
- Encourage large businesses to provide on-site day care

School Readiness

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Coordination of school readiness activities between daycare, Pre-K programs, and school kindergarten programs
- Explore funding opportunities for additional Pre-K programs
- Information campaign regarding developmental stages, etc. of children 0-5 disseminated monthly through local media outlets

Economic Security

- **Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.**

Job readiness and job retention

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Partner with local training programs/businesses to provide work place skills
- Work for daycare assistance options
- Promote referrals from DHR and other departments to Youth Enrichment Services to increase dropouts who achieve GED and learn job readiness and job retention skills

Assistance with obtaining employment or training

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Work with Alfred Saliba Family Resource Center to bring Career Center services to Dale County

Parent Involvement and Skills - Parents and

guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Parental denial of the need for additional and more appropriate parenting skills

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Have more trainers trained to conduct classes. This needs more funding to in order to be accomplished
- Partner with churches to teach Parent Project in the churches to increase parenting skills in families where youth have not yet presented behavioral problems

Mentoring Programs to assist families especially single parent homes

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Seek more volunteers and opportunities for mentoring
- Seek more community involvement in special events for mentoring program
- Seek funding for mentoring programs

Increase public awareness

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Flyers can go home in the Jackets of the report cards
- Local papers can advertise the classes
- T.V. and Radio can make announcements

Policy Recommendation

1. Legislative action to solidify the funding and support for Children's Trust Fund.
2. Seek funding and structure to make Parent Project a statewide project for prevention and treatment.

Accomplishments

Several members of the Dale County Children's Policy Council sponsored a party for the youth who could not afford the Senior Prom. Food, Door Prizes, and Entertainment was provided. More than 123 students attended and the reports were that everyone had a great time. The party was held with no drinking, drugs, cursing, or fighting, and the young people recommended that the community come together again to provide this safe and fun form of entertainment for the county.

Dale County collaborated with Henry County to employ the services of a VISTA Volunteer for the CPC.

The community supported the relay for Life and coordinated services to make this a success.